



John Urquhart
Vice Chair
Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs
Carrochan
Balloch
G83 8EG

February 22nd 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

**Planning Application Ref 2020/0261/DET Ben A'an Car Park, Loch Achray, Brig o'Turk:
Extension to Car Park and upgrade of vehicular access:**

On behalf of the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, the independent conservation and heritage charity covering the National Park, I am writing to confirm our support for this application which involves extending the capacity of this busy car park in a sensitive way which will make an important contribution to the wider Trossachs Visitor Management Project.

There have been long term road safety problems in the vicinity of this car park due to the growing popularity of Ben A'an which now attracts a staggering 60,000 walkers annually. When the mountain path was upgraded several years ago as part of the National Park wide *Mountains and the People* project this led to the path becoming even more popular and until the emergency TRO was introduced last summer there were year road problems with extensive verge parking beside a narrow and twisty road. The introduction of the TRO simply relocated the problem to other nearby locations such as the spur road to Loch Katrine which at times is now dangerous due to excessive verge side parking. There is an urgent need to address the shortfall in parking and we therefore welcome this car park improvement scheme which hopefully can be implemented fairly quickly by Forestry & Land Scotland.

We support this application for the following reasons:

- this is a popular visitor honeypot location in the heart of the Trossachs where additional car parking provision is urgently needed on visitor safety grounds;
- the inclusion of provision for a shuttle bus pull in is welcome as providing regular public bus service links with key sites such as this is part of the longer term solution for dealing with visitor pressures;
- the inclusion of secure bike parking is also welcome as the Trossachs is becoming a more popular cycling area;
- the car park expansion scheme has been sensitively designed and if approved will occupy an already badly degraded area due to the amount of human waste;
- the project has strong community support;
- the project will make a very positive contribution to improving visitor management at a key location on the Trossachs Trail.

While there are scenic and conservation designations covering the site it is important to stress the area zoned for the car park expansion is already badly degraded due to excessive toileting. The project will have a low environmental impact.

We commend this proposal and trust it will be approved by the end of March so that it can benefit from the Trossachs Visitor Management Project funding secured from VisitScotland. Along with the proposals at Loch Katrine and the refresh of the Trossachs Trail, this scheme will make a valuable contribution to enhancing the visitor experience which is in line with the objectives of the National Park Partnership and Local Development Plans

Yours sincerely,

John Urquhart
Vice Chair

Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs

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